

The CASE of Joseph Billers, Citizen of London.

L. 23 C. 2 (21)

Anno
1704.
&
1705.

Joseph Billers having been several Times Robb'd of Goods to a very great Value; and finding some of the said Robberies, to be committed by Persons belonging to the Foot-Guards: The said Billers, did thereupon use his utmost Endeavours to get further Discoveries, by which means about Ninety others, belonging to the said Guards, were detected and charg'd, upon the Oaths of several Persons, to be Guilty of the like Crimes; who by Direction of the Government, were Ordered to be taken up at a Muster and Review in Hyde-Park, the 6th and 11th of November, 1706. and sent into the Armies, in Spain and Portugal: Notwithstanding which, those Orders were not comply'd with; the Officers Receiving all their Pay to their own Use, for which they were allow'd not to do any Duty.

1706.
&
1707.

That upon Complaint of such Practices to the Government, the said Billers was directed to go on in Detecting those Abuses, and the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex, were Order'd to assist him therein: And the more effectually to prevent the like Crimes, Bills were brought into Parliament, and a Committee of the Honourable House of Commons, was appointed thereon; who were Order'd to Receive the Papers of the said Billers, relating to the same, and to make their Report, with their Opinion thereupon, to the House. Which was accordingly done; (viz.)

Resolved,

Veneris 4^o Die Aprilis, 1707.

"That it is the Opinion of this Committee, That Mr. Joseph Billers, of the City of London, hath been at great Expences and Hazard of his Life, in detecting and bringing to Justice several Burglars and other Criminals; for which he deserves ENCOURAGEMENT and PROTECTION."

1708.
1709.
1710.
&
1711.

That during several Years, the said Billers was not only prevented of the Favour, which (as he humbly conceives) was intended him by the said Resolution; but was put under the greatest Difficulties by Vexatious Suits at Law, and otherwise, by some Persons and their Abettors, who were charged before the said Committee, with illegal Practices. These Usages, were intended to have been laid before the Honourable the House of Commons, by Petition; and the said Billers caus'd his Case to be Printed, in order thereunto: But by being Summon'd to attend a Committee appointed to inquire into Abuses, in the Guards, and Chelsea-Hospital, was then prevented. And upon having their Honours Assurance of being Relieved, in respect to the Grievances and Oppressions, he then lay under; the said Billers became further Engaged in the Service of the Publick, and attended that Committee, with great Numbers of Persons, for about Four Months, at his own Cost and Charges. And the said Committee Reported to the House, the 26th of May, 1711,

"That the Abuses in the said Guards, were attended with no less mischievous Consequences, than the utter Destruction of all Credit in TRADE, and consequently of TRADE itself."

And the House thereupon, *inter alia*, Resolved, *Nemine Contradicente*,

"That Her Majesty should be Addressed, That all Persons who had been Guilty of those Abuses, (viz. in keeping but Two Thirds of Effective Men in a Company, and protecting many Debtors from their Creditors) should be PUNISHED, and to prevent the like for the future; and that the said Billers had done Good Service, in Detecting the said Abuses, and did deserve ENCOURAGEMENT for the same."

1712.
&
1713.

That upon the Importunity of many injur'd Persons, that had attended the said Committee, and others, who were Grieved by the Abuses in Chelsea-Hospital, and the Army; the said Billers shewed their Cases to the then Lord Treasurer, and by his Lordship's Order laid them before the Commissioners of Publick Accompts: As by their Journals and Reports to Parliament; as likewise, their Letter to the Treasury, the 6th of August, 1713, the many Frauds and Abuses then Detected by the said Billers may appear: But the Persons not having been Punished, pursuant to the Resolution and Desire of the House to Her Majesty in 1711, nor upon the Report of the said Commissioners of Accompts in 1712, and 1713. and instead of Relief to the Oppressed Complainants, several were turn'd out of their Pensions or Employments: which, in all probability, hath occasion'd the Abuses in the said Guards and Hospital to Increase, and that to such a Degree in the latter, as appears by the Report in the Gazette, the 3d of September, 1715, That by that Detection, there would be saved to the Publick, 76,741 l. 5 s. besides the Annual Sum of 38,370 l. 12 s. 6 d. All which Detections in the said Hospital, were begun and carried on before the said Committee and Commissioners, from 1710, to 1713. at the sole Expence of the said Billers, and was the Occasion of stopping the Pay of Persons unqualified, and consequently of saving the aforesaid Sums to the Publick.

That in December, 1714. the Case of the said Billers, was laid before the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and by the Allegations therein set forth, the Expences and other Damages the said Billers had sustain'd, amounted to above Ten Thousand Pounds; and their Lordships were then pleased to order a Report to be made, what Sum or Sums of Money had been Paid, or Ordered to be Paid to the said Billers: But to this Time no Report hath been made, with Regard to that Order.

ALL which is Humbly Submitted to the Honourable the HOUSE OF COMMONS.

CASE

OF

JOSEPH BILLERS,
Citizen of London.

